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FROM MICHAEL TURNER

This July

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*beauty*

of  
*Oceans*

take your  
breath

away



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# FRANK FRAZETTA FANTASY ILLUSTRATED

Featuring New and  
Continued Stories By

RICHARD CORBEN  
TOM GRINDBERG  
HILDEBRANDT BROS.  
ALEX HORLEY  
JOE JUSKO  
ELIO LEONE  
JAMES ROBINSON  
CHARLES VESS

Issue #3

With  
An Original  
Story By

**NEIL GAIMAN**

Illustrated By  
**TONY DANIEL**



**BEWARE!**  
ON SALE IN AUGUST

IN YOUR STORES THE WEEK OF MAY 4-8  
**GUARANTEED!**

*This May, our world comes*  
**ALIVE!**



TAN  
IRON-  
J. SMITH

*Spirit of the*  
**TAO** #1

D-TRON: BILLY TAN TEAM-TRON: JONATHAN D. SMITH

TOP GUN

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## A Letter From The Publishers

We'd like to extend our thanks to everyone who was responsible for making issue #1 a resounding success. This second issue brings you even more of the world's greatest creators all united in one magazine. Inside you will find sequential stories from fantasy legends such as Moebius, The Hidebrandt Brothers and Larry Elmore, an exciting Battle Chasers storyline from red-hot comic artist Joe Madureira and a thought provoking historical retrospective from Tony Harris. Also featured are two stories from fantastic writer Bill Leone illustrated by Alex Horley and Tom Grubb and a preview of Alan Dean Foster's upcoming novel *Carnivores Of Light And Darkness*.

Our next issue will hit the stands in August featuring continuations of the Joe Jusko and Richard Corben stories from issue #1, continuations of the Hidebrandt Brothers' creation as well as the two captivating Bill Leone stories featured in this issue, plus all new stories from Neil Gaiman, Charles Vess and James Robinson. As with every issue, the August edition will feature another one of Frank Frazetta's timeless masterpieces on the cover.

Most importantly, we'd like to thank Frank Frazetta, the grand master of fantasy illustration, for being the heart of this magazine and for setting the standard of quality in each and every issue. We hope that you enjoy this issue and feel the attention poured into every page by each of the fantastic artists involved. By the way, producing issue #1 was a blast! The pictures below were taken in the middle of the print run at hmmm...let's say 4am?



## FRANK FRAZETTA FANTASY ILLUSTRATED

Summer 1998 • Volume 1, Number 2

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"Kane on the Golden Sea"

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TODD MCFARLANE'S

# SPAWN

A central figure of the character Spawn, wearing a dark, hooded suit with a large, flowing cape. He has glowing yellow eyes and is standing in a dark, smoky environment. The character is positioned directly in front of the title 'Spawn'.

THE WAR BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL  
CONTINUES...

FRIDAY, MAY 15TH, MIDNIGHT

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# KANE ON THE GOLDEN SEA

The first major exhibition of Frazetta's art was held at the Penn-Stroud hotel in East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. The year was 1977 and Frank's wife, Ellie, brought a fresh wet oil to the exhibit as a special surprise. That oil was Kane On The Golden Sea.

Everyone in attendance was awe-struck and honored to see it first. This work is an unqualified masterpiece and clearly displays Frazetta's command of gesture as the heart of a composition. Everything flows from the imposing figure of Kane imperiously staring into the horizon. His figure is rock solid, yet wonderfully expressive. Kane's character is etched in that geometry of muscle; a hard world requires hard muscle to survive, to prevail. His intimidating right arm is brilliantly handled, taut, suffused with emotion, the prospect of battle has energized every muscle. The slightly raised finger is a virtuoso touch, indicating an eager tension, ready for action. Surrounding Kane the other elements reinforce the mood- a beautifully textured billowing sail, rapidly darkening skies, and magically tinted seas that presage the wonders ahead. The screaming demon on the prow is a metaphor for Kane's soul- a hellish scream for battle. In this one composition, Frazetta combines the monumentality of Michelangelo, the subtlety of Raphael, and the black vision of Goya.

There are no secret potions, paints, or exotic instruments responsible for Frazetta's magic. He begins with an idea, sometimes that idea comes directly from a text. Frazetta demands a wide creative latitude for his interpretation of content and imagery. A small pencil drawing is sketched. If appropriate, Frazetta adds a bit of watercolor to this sketch to give it full form and to observe the effects of light. Often, even this coloring process is unnecessary and Frazetta moves directly to the easel, relying on his intuitive sense of color correctness.

Frazetta paints with thin applications of oil mixed with a drying agent. Broad areas of color and broad lines are gradually made even more precise. Frazetta prefers to keep his inspiration fresh by avoiding photo reference and other crutches. Frazetta is the definition of the creative artist, he outthinks everyone and outdraws everyone. He has no peer. Frazetta is a living national treasure.

Dr. David Wintewicz





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It is a time when chaos and order fight for supremacy. A time when frightened men huddle around their fires telling stories, that though terrible and fantastic, are true.



This is the time when legends wander across the land and death may sweep from the sky on terrible wings.



There are a few who are supreme. They are the beings of great renown. They are the purveyors of unspeakable horrors.

They are the mighty...

They are the ancient...


They are the...

Art: Elmore  
Story: Larry Elmore  
Kevin Clark

# FALLEN



The ancient beast wasn't  
killing for food or necessity.



It's ability to cause terror and death  
quenches the unnatural cravings of  
this unnatural creature.



He knows she's there...

It was killing, purely for the pleasure it derives  
from the pain inflicted on things weaker and  
less powerful than itself.

DAMN...

Now she will come.



WHEREVER I  
GO, IT'S  
ALWAYS THE  
SAME.

MORE LIFE  
SENSELESSLY  
EXTINGUISHED.

KETHRAM,  
OF ALL MY BRETHREN,  
ONLY HE CONSOVS  
WITH DRAGONS.

AND THAT  
GREAT RED IS  
HIS SCALY  
BEAST--



AND IT WILL KILL  
NO MORE THIS DAY.

In the early days, when she and her brethren were first cast upon this earth, the deaths of mortals had no meaning. They were mere chaff to be used and cast away. Their suffering was of no concern to her, because she could not see beyond the light of his beauty.

He was the fairest the most high. His brightness shone as the morning star hiding the darkness lingering beneath. They followed as awestruck children, not knowing until too late that they had been deceived. She and a few others realized that they had become destroyers of life and all that was good.

Once she saw past his light and into the shadows, the revelation of the nature of the beast became apparent. The writhing horrid ugliness of evil in its purest form was exposed.

Then came a parting between the fallen. She was not the first to see through the deceptions and lies, nor was she the first to part to him though the parting, for her, was more difficult. She was his right arm, his sword; she was the closest to his light.

Those that departed from him sought their own desires, each in their own way. Over time the evil of her past weighed heavy on her heart.

While living amongst mankind, she discovered the sanctity of life and the potential of the human spirit, which she had vowed to protect at all costs.





An overwhelming rage consumes her as she hears the keep of Kath'Kaba like fire forging steel from the flames of her rage forms the knowledge that she has the power to judge her own and with that power comes a great responsibility.



She is the executioner. She will put an end to all that is evil.

This day, one of the brethren must fall.

who seeks audience with my master and what dost they bring in tribute?

DEMACHEUS  
YOU DON'T RECOGNIZE ME? LOOK CLOSER AND YOU WILL SEE YOUR DOOM.

Strong words for one so small show tribute or begone!

MY BLADE IS MY TRIBUTE. YOU SCALY BASTARD!





DE'NALIA!

KETH'RAHN...

WHY HAVE YOU  
DONE THIS?



YOU MUST BE STOPPED!  
I WILL STAND BY NO LONGER  
AND ALLOW YOU REVEL IN YOUR  
DEPRAVED DESIRES.



WHAT IS IT THAT  
YOU ACCUSE OF ME,  
MY SISTER?

THIS DAY  
I HAVE SEEN YOUR HAND  
AT WORK. YOU UNLEASHED THE  
BEAST TO PERFORM ATROCITIES  
UPON THE INNOCENTS OF THIS LAND.

...AND NO  
LONGER CALL  
ME SISTER!



YOUR TRAVELS  
HAVE ADDLED  
YOUR BRAIN.

DESMACHROUS  
HAS NOT HUNTED IN A  
FORTNIGHT. THIS IS MY LAND AND  
THESE ARE MY PEOPLE, I WOULD NOT  
DESTROY THAT WHICH IS ALREADY  
MINE, NOR WOULD I ALLOW  
DESMACHROUS.



LIAR!



YOUR  
EMOTIONS HAVE  
TAKEN COMMAND  
OF YOU.

ARE YOU SO VAIN  
TO THINK THAT YOU  
CANNOT BE MISTAKEN?

THINK ABOUT  
IT!





DE'NALA,  
YOU HAVE BEEN  
DECEIVED...



IF YOU?

I'M  
BAAACK...  
AM I NOT A  
WELCOME  
SIGHT?



DO YOU NOT THINK  
THAT "DECEIVED" IS SUCH  
A STRONG WORD? I MUCH PREFER  
THE PHRASE, "LITTLE'S NATURAL  
TALENT COMBINED WITH SUCH  
REFRESHING ARROGANCE".

FOR ALL  
OF HIS PROMISE,  
KETH'BAHN WAS SUCH  
A DISAPPOINTMENT.



HIS TENDANCY  
TOWARD DECENCY AND  
RIGHTOUSNESS, OF LATE,  
HAS CAUSED HIS CONCERN.  
BUT YOU, MY SWEET DE'NALA,  
I KNEW I COULD DEPEND  
ON YOU.



AAAH...  
THAT'S BETTER,  
OUR WAYWARD SON IS  
BACK WHERE HE  
BELONGS...



WITH ME,  
AS YOU  
SHOULD  
BE.



I CURSE THE WILD HEART THAT CAUSED YOU TO LEAVE. YET IT IS JUST THIS THING THAT FUELS MY DESIRE... I AM INCOMPLETE WITHOUT YOU.

WHY? WHY DID YOU TRICK ME INTO KILLING KETH'RAHN? WHY DIDN'T YOU DO IT?

YOUR PASSION IS INTOXICATING. WATCHING YOU WIELD YOUR WRATH IN SELF-RIGHTEOUS FURY ONLY FUELS MY CRAVING TO BE WITH YOU. KETH'RAHN WAS BUT A CHANCE FOR ME TO SHOW YOU THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS BELONG... WITH ME.

GO AHEAD AND HIDE YOUR TREACHERY BEHIND ENTICING WORDS. BUT YOUR LIES ARE LAID BARE BEFORE ME. WE WILL NEVER BE WITH YOU AGAIN.



YET, WE ARE SO MUCH ALIKE YOU AND I.

...REDEMPTION?

DO YOU REALLY BELIEVE THAT YOU CAN BE REDEEMED?

I AM NOTHING LIKE YOU, MORNINGSTAR. I SEEK...

MY DESTINY IS MINE TO DO WITH AS I WILL. AND I CHOOSE NOT TO BE WITH YOU.

WHEN YOU DECIDED TO JOIN WITH ME, YOU SEALED YOUR DESTINY.



SOONER OR LATER YOU WILL BE MINE AGAIN... MY SWEET DE'NIALA.

Unlike mortal men, there was no salvation for her, but time was on her side. Perhaps somehow she could attain her redemption... After all, she had the time left on earth.

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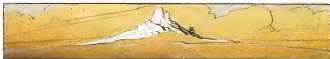


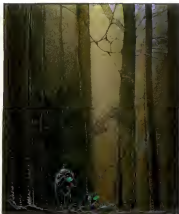
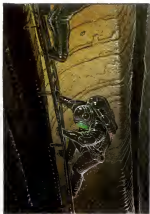
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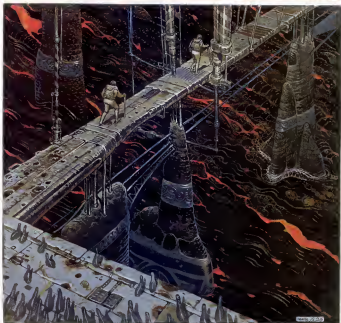
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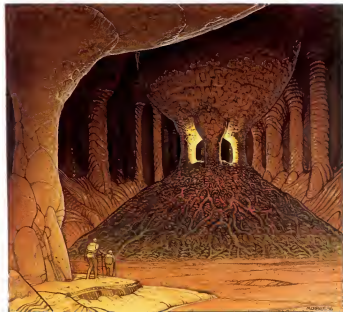
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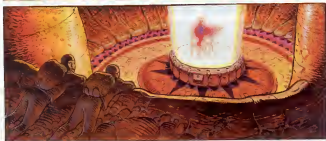
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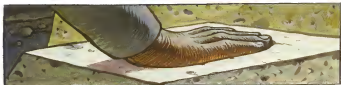


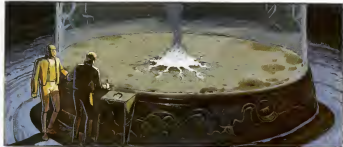














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**A** QUIET  
MOMENT...

**CALIBRETT**  
OUTLAW WARRIOR

**ELLY**  
PET-SIZED  
JUGGERNAUT

WHY AM  
I DEAD?

HMM... AN INTERESTING  
TEXT ON AVIAN HUNTING  
METHODOLOGY - WRITTEN BY  
MR. GARRISON! FURTHER, IT  
IS FILLED WITH THE MOST  
FASCINATING OBSERVATIONS  
ONE COULD EXPECT.

OK...  
NO, THAT'S  
OKAY.

**INDIAN**  
SURRENDER  
SURRENDER

SHHHK  
SHHHK  
SHHHK

~ AND  
**GARRISON**  
LEGENDARY  
SACREDSTONE

SACREDSTONE  
JANUARY DOY  
WITH THAT  
ROCK?

THIS ROCK  
ALLOWS ME TO  
CLIMB IN SMOKE  
DESPITE THE  
SLIGHTEST  
RESTRICTIONS  
FROM ITS  
BLADE.

I WISH I  
HAD ONE OF  
THOSE  
STONES.

~ MAYBE IT COULD  
GET RID OF ANY  
IMPERFECTIONS.  
I'M NEW TO THIS  
WIND STUFF -  
SOMETIMES I  
FEEL OUT  
OF PLACE.

SHALL IS A DULL STONE  
THAT GAMES EDGE AS THE  
PAGES.

COURAGE IS  
SOMETHING THAT  
CAN'T BE TAUGHT.  
AND YOU GILLY ARE  
BLESSSED WITH BOTH.

REALLY?  
WOULD YOU ALWAYS  
THIS TOWN EVER  
AS A KID?

IT'S NOT ALWAYS  
MEET THE TIGER AND  
GULLY. AS A PARTIAL  
TALKING, THE DRAGON  
TRAINED IN ALL FORMS  
OF COMBAT —

— AND HAVE  
ENDURED ENDLESS  
HOURS OF PAINFUL  
CONFESSIONS — BUT  
GULLY, WITH YOU  
GUT WAS NOT IN THE  
QUESTIONS — IN FACT,  
IT WAS PROBABLY  
LOOK MY FINAL  
THINKING BEFORE  
WAS TO RISE DOWN  
AND KILL A MAMMOTH  
BEAST CALLED THE  
LUNARIS, TAKING OUR  
BATTLE. GULLY  
FIGHTS LAST FROM  
TO ME — SO I  
TRUSTED MY  
INSTRUCTORS AND  
LOOKED AT GULLY  
STOPPING THE FIGHT.  
THE DRAGON BEAST  
THE MONSTER HE DID  
THOUGHT HIM TO BE,  
BUT A PAINFUL  
INTELLIGENT  
CREATURE WHOSE  
ACTS WERE  
SPIRITUAL  
MANIFESTATIONS.  
I WAS REFORMED  
FOR DISOBEYING  
ORDER — BUT THAT  
DAY I ALSO LEARNED  
SOMETHING TO THIS  
DAY. THE LUNARIS  
KNOWS MY MOST  
SECRET AND  
TRUSTED FRIEND, SO  
YOU SEE, GULLY  
KNOWS WHAT TO  
FIGHT IS AS IMPORTANT  
AS KNOWING HOW  
TO FIGHT!

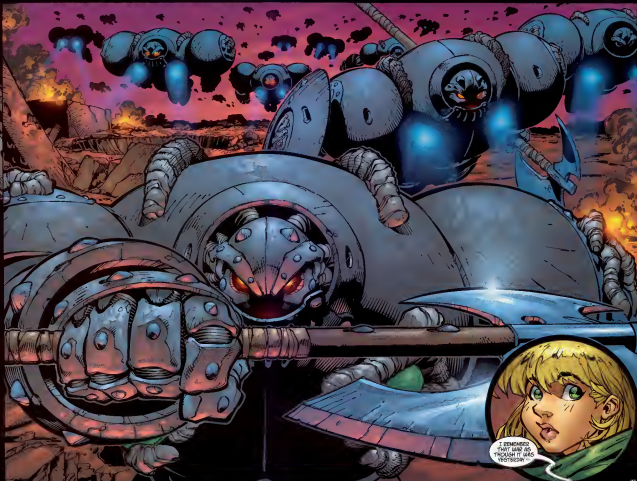


SEEN  
GARDEN — I  
STILL HAVE SO MUCH  
TO LEARN. "WETTER"  
YOU'RE A MAMMOTH —  
YOU MUST BE BORN IN  
SOME MAJOR  
BATTLES, HUH?



HMMZZT... YES THIS  
IS... HELL... BUT  
MY STORY IS FAR  
MORE TRAGIC.

MY BROTHER  
AND I WERE  
CREATED TO BE  
GREAT ENGINES  
OF WAR. OUR TASK  
TO ERADICATE THE  
THREAT OF INVASION  
BY A RACE OF  
POWERFUL  
BRILLIANTLY  
SMART AFTER OUR  
VICTORY, THE VERY  
PEACE WE WERE  
BORN TO PROTECT  
BEGAN TO FEAR OUR  
VERY DESTRUCTIVE  
CAPABILITIES. WE  
WERE HUNTED  
DOWN & DESTROYED  
TOGETHER. EVERY  
LAST ONE OF US  
DROVE TO  
EXTINCTION. NOT  
FOR NOTHING IN  
MARCHING IN  
ARMORED  
SHELLS, I TOO  
COULD HAVE  
PERISHED. IN THE  
MANY YEARS  
FOLLOWING THAT  
POUNCE, I HAVE  
LEARNED ONE  
IMPORTANT  
LESSON.  
NEVERTHELESS,  
DESTRUCTION IS  
A WAY OF  
PRECIOUS LIFE.  
I MUST REPAIR  
WHAT I HAVE  
DESTROYED.  
THIS IS THE CODE  
I NOW LIVE BY.



I REMEMBERED  
THAT LAND WAS  
TRICKIER IT WAS  
YESTERDAY...



— I'VE BEEN  
THROUGH THE FIRE —  
SOME, MORE TIMES THAN  
OTHERS. FOR MANY HUND  
YEARS OLD, I'VE GLOOMED  
MORE TIME ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD THAN ALL  
OF US PUT TOGETHER NOW.  
I'VE NEVER DERIVED ANY  
SORT OF PLEASURE OR  
HEDONISTIC ENJOYMENT  
IN THE ANCIENT ARTS  
OF SMITH, COOK, BUT BE  
IT POWER AND DETERMINATION,  
OR FINE, MINDS WHO  
DON'T USE THE MIND. I  
PRACTICE IN MAGIC —  
TROUBLE ALWAYS HAS  
A WAY OF FINDING  
ME. YOU SHOULD  
BE WORRIED ABOUT  
THE LACK OF FIGHT  
TIME DAILY — THE  
SMOKEWARS RIGHT —  
YOU'VE GOT WHAT  
IT TAKES.  
YOU COME FROM A  
STRONG STOCK.



I LOOK  
AT YOU SOME  
TIMES — — THE  
FIRE IN YOUR EYES —  
I SEE FOR OLD MAN  
YOU'VE GOT A LOT  
OF ADAMS  
YOU.

THERE IS A REASON HE  
WAS CALLED THE GREAT  
ADVANCE - BECAUSE THERE  
WASNT A THREAT TOO  
GREAT FOR HIM TO FACE.

HE WAS THE MOST  
ADVANCED HERO IN THE  
TERRITORIES - WELL,  
THAT WAS BEFORE HE  
BE CAME A PLACE IF  
IT WASNT FOR HIM.

HE CRAVED OUT MOST  
OF THIS LAND WITH HIS  
OWN HANDS. THAT MAKES  
HIM A HERO - THAT LEGACY  
WAS HIS PASSION ON  
TO YOU. NOW CAN  
YOU POSSIBLY FAIL?





FOURD --  
I HATE TO  
SACRIFICE THE  
FREE-SIDE  
CHIEF --  
BUT --

... WE'VE GOT  
**COMPANY!**

CALIBUSTO --  
I'LL TAKE THE  
POINT. COVER ME  
KNOWAN HING  
BACK --

... IF WE  
NEED SOME  
MAJOR FIRE  
POWER, FEEL  
FREE TO JUMP IN



STAND BACK,  
BANS!

FATHER, I KNOW YOU'RE  
WATCHING -- THIS ONE'S  
FOR YOU!

AND SO,  
A QUIET  
MOMENT  
IS ONCE  
AGAIN  
BROKEN:  
AND A NEW  
GENERATION  
OF

**BATTLE  
CHASERS**  
IS  
BORN!

If you liked the *Battle Chasers* story in this issue, check out

JOE MADUREIRA

# BATTLE CHASERS



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THIS JUNE...

FIND OUT WHAT EVERYONE'S  
BEEN SCREAMING ABOUT!

FUN!

EXCITEMENT!

HORROR!



Monthly, Baby!

KEEP YOUR EYES PEELED FOR THE VARIETY COVER!  
DON'T SAY WE DIDN'T WARN YA!

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THE  
Tenth  
#10

WRITTEN  
AND DRAWN  
BY CREATOR  
TONY  
DANIEL

INKED BY  
SALEEM  
CRAWFORD  
COLORED BY  
BRIAN  
MOUNTS

CHECK OUT OUR  
WEB SITE AT  
[WWW.THE10TH.COM](http://WWW.THE10TH.COM)



# The Emerald Seven

Created and written by  
Greg Hildebrandt,  
Tim Hildebrandt and  
Greg Hildebrandt, Jr.  
Edited by Glenn Herdling

CAPTAIN: THE  
BRAIN'S SHIP IS  
GAININ' ON US!  
THE SUN'S  
ALMOST GONE!  
WE'RE LOSIN'  
POWER!

KZZAM

THERE  
GOES  
ANOTHER  
SOLAR  
SAIL!

WE'RE  
DEAD  
MEAT!

BOOM!  
BOOM!

CHICK,  
GIVE ME THE  
TRIFORUM!

HERE,  
CAPT!

THE  
FARKIN'  
BASTARDS!

SLEEP, FLY THIS  
TO COMMANDER BLADE  
AT ROCK CITY!

IF THE BRAIN  
GETS IT, IT'S  
ALL OVER!

EEK!  
ME DO,  
NOVA!

BLAM BLAM

KLANG

KLANG

PIRATE SCUM!  
WE BOARD YOU  
NOW!

WE'RE DONE FOR!  
WE'RE DONE FOR!

CHACK,  
MAN THE  
CANNON!

FIRE  
ON MY  
COMMAND!

AYE,  
AYE,  
CAPTN!

NEW  
NEW

GET  
TO ROCK  
CITY!  
FIND  
BLADE!

STICK,  
THEY'RE  
GONNA BLOW  
US OUTTA  
THE SKY!

COOL  
IT, WEEDY!  
THEY  
AINT DOIN  
NOTHIN'!  
AT LEAST  
NOT 'TILL THEY  
GET THE  
TRANSFORM!



WHAT THE  
FARK ARE YOU  
GUYS WAITIN'  
FOR?!  
LET'S  
BLAST 'EM!  
I WANT  
MY MONEY!

THAT'S ALL  
YOU EVER THINK  
ABOUT, GACPER--  
MONEY!

NBODY  
GETS  
ANYTHING  
TLL THE  
TRIFORUM'S  
SAFE  
AND  
SOUND!

OH  
JEEPER!  
HERE THEY  
COME!



IN NAME OF  
OVERLORD BRAIN--  
THROW DOWN  
YOUR WEAPON!

I GIVE  
THE ORDERS  
ABOARD  
THE  
SHADOW,  
ENFORCER!



HAND OVER  
TRIFORUM  
YOU STOLE,  
NOVA!



SCREW  
YOU!  
I  
FOUND  
IT!  
IT'S  
NOT  
YOURS!



TALK, TALK,  
TALK ---

**KCHUNK**



OUTTA  
MY  
WAY!

CHOPPER---!

ARGH!

GAK!

OOPI!

FIRE!!

CHICK,  
THEIR GUNS!

AYE, AYE,  
CAP'N!

K-TOOM

FRZATIA

BLAM  
BLAM  
BLAM



PARTY  
TIME!

CHICK!

THE GRAPPLING  
HOOKS!

YES,  
MA'AM!

FRAAZATA

SO LONG,  
BRAIN SCUM!

BALL  
SQUISH  
'EM  
FLAT!





NOVA!  
THERE'S A  
WHOLE FLEET  
OF RASORBACKS  
COMIN'!



WE'RE  
DONE  
FOR!

WE'RE  
DONE  
FOR!

ALL HANDS  
BELOW!

PREPARE  
TO DIVE!

DOUBLE  
TIME!

BALL  
WANNA  
SQUISH  
EM!

GOT ALL  
PUMPED  
UP!

GET READY  
TO MORPH!





REVERSE  
FORWARD THRUSTERS!  
ENGAGE MORPH!

WHAT ABOUT  
SLEECAH?

NOVA!





**BABLAMM**

**ZZZRRRAAAP**

WE'RE  
HIT!

**VVVVWAAAAZZZZZOOOOOW**

BRACE  
FOR  
IMPACT!

**ZZZRAAP**

**ZZZRAAP**

**FLOODSH**

**KRUMP**



# SPLASH



OH  
CRAP!

CONTINUED...

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variant of the  
Joe Madureira  
cover!

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DEATH, DESTRUCTION, CONQUEST AND POWER:  
APHRODISIACS FOR SOME... NECESSITIES FOR THE TRULY EVIL.

I SEE MY  
LORD STILL  
ENJOYS THE  
THRILL OF  
BATTLE

DESTROYING  
THE ENEMY IN  
BATTLE IS INTENSIFYING.  
YOU OUGHT TO TRY IT  
SOMETIME.

CYRUS,  
I ASSURE  
YOU'LL FIND  
ME THERE  
CAPTAIN

WITHOUT DELAY,  
MY LORD.

# INFERNUS TERRA

WRITTEN BY BILL LEONE ART BY ALEX MORLEY (PART II)

WADING THROUGH THE CARNAGE,  
LORD Y'ORR'S VICIOUS BUTCHER  
HAS A SINGULAR GOAL IN MIND:

UHHH

TO FIND ONE LIVING  
AMONGST THE DEAD

THE STENCH OF DEATH PERMEATES THE  
AIR, YET A FLICKER OF LIFE CANNOT  
ESCAPE A WARDEN OF DOOM

WHAT  
A PITIFUL  
EXCUSE FOR  
A LEADER

PLEASE  
I BID OF YOU  
SPARE ME MY  
DIGNITY

**COWARD!**

...I WILL SHOW YOU  
NO COMPASSION, YOUR  
LIFE, IF YOU'D LIKE TO CALL  
IT THAT, IS IN THE HANDS  
OF LORD Y'ORR

PLEASE,  
I BID OF YOU,  
IF YOU END MY LIFE  
AND SPARE ME MY  
CERTAIN RESERVY, I  
WILL TELL YOU THE  
LOCATION OF MY  
TREASURE

I  
HAVE ALL THE  
TREASURE I DESIRE...  
THANKS TO INSOLENT  
BOTS LIKE YOURSELF...  
YOU SHOULD HAVE  
JOINED US WHEN  
YOU HAD THE  
CHANCE.





AUGUST 3, 1992. AN ISOLATED  
GOVERNMENT RESEARCH CENTER IN  
THE MOUNTAINS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA.

NO REM...  
LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER  
MOMENTOUS DAY IN THE  
LIFE OF A GOVERNMENT  
RESEARCH ANALYST.

I COULD USE  
ANOTHER CUP OF  
COFFEE... HOW 'BOUT  
YOU?

NO THANKS...  
I'M WIRELESS...  
NO MORE CAPPING  
FOR ME.

SUIT YOURSELF.  
MORE FOR ME.

HEY STEVE,  
GET OVER HERE  
NOW!

WHAT IS IT?

IT'S THAT SAME  
RHYTHMIC SHAKE ACTIVITY  
JUST ABOVE THE  
WANTLE.

WHAT REGION  
IS IT IN  
THIS TIME?

RIGHT UNDER  
MOSCOW!

7:00AM THE NEXT MORNING AT A  
FIVE-STOREY BUILDING IN WASHINGTON DC



IT SEEMS THEY  
FINALLY DECIDED TO  
TAKE ME SERIOUSLY

THE CENTRAL  
HAS BEEN ANXIOUSLY  
AWAITING YOUR  
ARRIVAL.

LOOKS LIKE  
I HAVE A CAPTIVE  
AUDIENCE

I WOULDN'T  
DISAPPOINT THEN  
IF I WERE YOU

GOOD MORNING  
GENTLEMEN.

WHAT I'M GOING  
TO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY  
IS ALARMING, AND FRANKLY  
I BELIEVE IT TO BE AN  
IMMEDIATE THREAT TO  
OUR NATIONAL  
SECURITY.



I ASK  
THAT YOU  
REMAIN OPEN  
MINDED

WHAT I  
HAVE TO TELL  
YOU MAY SOUND  
RIDICULOUS  
AT FIRST,

BUT  
FIVE YEARS  
OF RESEARCH AND  
STUDY HAVE LEAD ME  
TO THE CONCLUSION  
WHICH I WILL NOW  
SHARE WITH  
YOU.



THIS CHART REPRESENTS  
SOUND ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE  
AT THIS MOMENT UNDERNEATH  
CHICAGO.

ON THE LAST  
FIVE YEARS, THIS  
SOUND ACTIVITY HAS BEEN  
RECORDED BELOW EVERY  
MAJOR CITY IN THE  
WORLD.

WITH THE  
EXCEPTION OF  
MOSCOW.



ARE YOU  
TRYING TO TELL  
US THAT THE RUSSIANS  
ARE BEING TRIST?

UNTIL  
THIS MORNING  
I HAD MY SUSPICION,  
BUT THE SAME ACTIVITY  
HAS JUST BEGUN  
UNDERNEATH  
MOSCOW.

WHERE'D THEY  
FIND THIS GUY?




SO WHAT  
ARE YOU SAYING  
PROFESSOR?  
I FIND YOUR  
RESULTS INTERESTING  
BUT I DON'T SEE HOW IT  
AFFECTS THE MILITARY  
POSITION OF THE  
UNITED STATES.



SOME FORCE  
IS INTENTIONALLY  
CAUSING THIS... IT'S  
NOT A NATURAL  
OCCURRENCE.

MY CONCLUSION  
IS THAT...

WE ARE  
NOT ALONE!



TWO MILES BENEATH MOSCOW, GOLD ROCK  
CRUMPLES AS 80,000 TONS OF THE EARTH'S  
FINEST METALS AND ALLOYS WORKS UPWARD

FOR YEARS MAN HAS CONCENTRATED  
HIS EFFORTS SEARCHING THE HEAVENS  
FOR SIGNS OF INTELLIGENT LIFE

SOMETIMES WHAT WE ARE SEARCHING  
FOR IS RIGHT BELOW OUR NOSE





GET  
THESE SLAVES BACK  
TO WORK... THIS TUNNEL  
WILL BE DONE WHEN I  
RETURN, OR YOU WILL  
ALL DIE.



WITH EACH PASSING DAY,  
THE RESISTANCE TO LOUD  
YOUR WEAKENS.  
THE REMAINING FEW  
HAVE GAINED TO TRUST  
THEIR PRUL PLING.



IT IS OUR ONLY  
HOPE FOR SURVIVAL.  
OUR RESISTANCE IS  
FINISHED.

YOUR  
CENTRE'S WILL  
EASILY SPY ANY ORGANIZED  
MOVEMENT. IT MUST BE  
ONE OR TWO  
AT MOST.

HOW DO  
WE FIND THE  
RIGHT TUNNEL,  
AND WHO  
WILL GO?

I  
WILL.

WHAT MAKES YOU  
THINK YOU CAN  
SUCCEED?

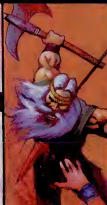
I KNOW THE  
EXACT LOCATION OF  
THE HIDDEN PASSAGE  
AS A SLAVE TO YOUR IN  
MY YOUTH, I DELIVERED  
SUPPLIES TO THE  
GUARDS.

SO BE IT  
YOU WILL GO.  
AND WITH YOU SHALL  
LIVE THE HOPES OF  
OUR PEOPLE.

I  
WILL NEED ONE  
OTHER WARRIOR TO  
ACCOMPANY ME WHO IS  
WILLING TO SACRIFICE  
HIS LIFE.

AND  
THAT WILL BE ME.  
OF COURSE THIS OLD  
WARRIOR WOULD LIKE  
TO SPILL HIS ENEMY'S  
BLOOD ONCE  
MORE.







THE YOUNG WARRIOR FIGHTS WELL. THE SPIRIT OF THE OLD MAN SURGES NOW WITHIN HIM.



YOU DID NOT DIE IN VENI. YOUR HOPE SHALL LIVE WITHIN ME.



THOUSANDS OF STEPS RECKON THE LONG ASCENT TO SALVATION BEGINS.



SUNLIGHT STREAMS ACROSS THE YOUNG WARRIOR'S BODY. INSPIRATED WITH RENEWED HOPE, HE APPROACHES ANOTHER WORLD.

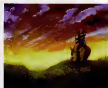


OUR WORLD WELCOMES A NEW VISITOR.



TO BE CONTINUED  
NEXT ISSUE!

# FANTASTIC ART From MORPHEUS!

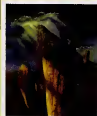


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FEBRUARY 2008  
TOKYO 9:00 P.M.

# SpaceJackers

WRITTEN BY **ALIO LEONE**  
ART BY **TOM SANDERS**  
COLORS BY **BRAD VANCLAY**

A NEW HOVERCAR  
DEALERSHIP IN THE  
HEART OF THE CITY

ステルス  
 Hovercar

THE HOVERCAR  
DEALERSHIP  
WILL BE RIGHT HERE

ONE CONGRAT  
AND PLEASED WAVING  
FOR SOME

THERE ARE THOSE THAT HAVE  
AND THOSE THAT HAVE NOT

HEY KID,  
YOU'VE GOT TO  
BE OLD ENOUGH  
TO FLY ONE TO  
BUY ONE.

I'M NOT  
BUYING, BUT  
I MIGHT BE  
FLYING!

SCRAM KID!  
BEFORE I CALL  
THE COPS.

SURE THING  
DUCK

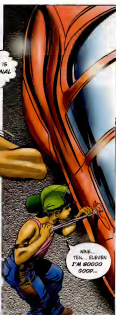
ENTERPRISING INDIVIDUALS  
FIND A WAY TO HAVE

THE RISK: GREAT  
THE REWARD: MORE THAN MOST  
ADULTS WILL MAKE IN A COUPLE MONTHS



IT'S  
TIME FOR AM  
TO FLY.

20  
SECONDS IS  
MY PERSONAL  
BEST



NINE...  
TEN... ELEVEN  
I'M GOING  
SOON...



FOURTEEN...  
FIFTEEN...  
SIXTEEN...

heading down the highway  
looking for adventure...



NINETEEN...  
LIKE TAKING  
CANDY FROM  
A BABY



FLASHY ARMAN SUIT, FANCY FEEDORA, & CANE JUST FOR EFFECT...HONG LIKES TO STAY CLEAN HIS KIDS SO THE DIRTY WORK, AS THERE ARE NO CHILD LABOR LAWS PERTAINING TO THIEF AS A PROFESSION

AWW, JORDAN COME IN.

CASE TO SEE THE REPLAY?

NO THANKS, I'VE SEEN MYSELF PLINY OF TIMES

HERE YOU ARE LITTLE ONE LEAVE US NOW

HONG'S EXTENSIVE ARRAY OF UNDETECTABLE SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT THROUGHOUT THE CITY ALLOWS HIM TO KEEP A TIGHT REIGN ON HIS EMPLOYEES AND A WATCHFUL EYE ON HIS COMPETITION

HAVE A SEAT JORDAN, YOU'RE THE BEST I HAVE - MY PROTEGE

I MUST SAY THOUGH YOUR AGE IS BEGINNING TO COMPROMISE YOUR ANONYMITY

YOU'VE BEEN VERY VALUABLE TO MR. HONG LIKE A SON THEN ONE OF MY THIEVES. BUT IT IS TIME FOR YOU TO MOVE ON

BUT WHAT WILL I DO?

YOU ARE VERY RESOURCEFUL...AND THIS SHALL GIVE YOU A HEAD START

HOW SO?

IT SEEMS YOU'RE BECOMING A MAJOR CELEBRITY WITH THE LOCAL POLICE

FEBRUARY 2016: 20 YEARS LATER - SOMEWHERE  
IN THE ALTEOMA GALAXY, JOSEPH WAS FOUND A NEW  
METHOD OF SUPPORTING HIMSELF

UNTIL ABOUT 20 YEARS AGO, THE METHODS OF  
SPACE TRAVEL WERE RELATIVELY FUNDAMENTAL  
AND SIMILAR TO THOSE OF THE 21ST CENTURY

"TIME IS MONEY", AS THEY SAY IN BUSINESS,  
AND THE RACE WAS ON TO SYNTHESIZE THE  
PERFECT FUEL AND DEVELOP THE FASTEST ENGINE,  
REDUCING TRANSPORT TIME FOR INTERPLANETARY  
COMMERCE BY A FEW DAYS REALIZED FORTUNES  
FOR THE SHIPPING CONGLOMERATES

A LONELY PLANET IN A Distant SECTOR  
HOUSED THE SOLUTION - AND AN AMBITIOUS  
MAN FROM EARTH HAD THE MEANS

JOEL  
ASSURED ME  
THAT THIS CARGO WILL  
BE WORTH IT. DUMB  
IF IT'S NOT WHAT I THINK  
IT IS. I'LL HAVE  
MY HOPE

I HOPE WE'LL  
NOT RISKING OUR  
BANKS ON A TANKER  
FULL OF SKECH  
JUICE AGAIN

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL  
CARGO VESSEL PROTECTED  
BY THE LEAGUE OF PLANETS.  
STATE YOUR INTENTIONS  
IMMEDIATELY

DO NOT RESIST  
AND WE WILL SPARE  
YOUR LIVES

YOU HAVE  
SOMETHING  
WE WANT?

HELL,  
ARE THEIR  
WEAPONS  
DISABLED?

THEIR  
OUTER WEAPONS WILL  
BE OUT FOR FIVE MINUTES  
I PROBE THEIR CANNONS WITH  
THE NITROUS GREENADIS.  
WE'LL HAVE TO MOVE  
FAST





PROTECTIVE  
DEFENSES ARE DOWN!  
THIS IS A RED ALERT!  
MAN YOUR STATIONS!



BOMBS  
AWAY!







PLANET HELFOW... OUTLAW  
PLANET IN THE OCCE GALAXY

LOOKIN  
LIKE THEY'RE  
EXPECTING US

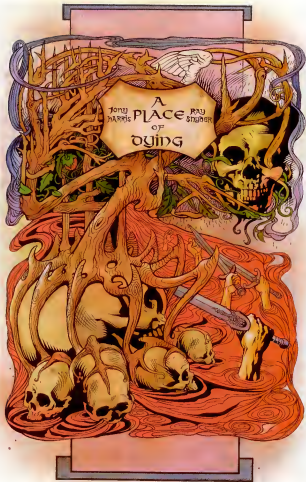
BLACK MARKETEERS HAVE BECOME  
SLIGHTLY MORE ADVANCED

TIME TO  
SEE AN OLD  
FRIEND

I  
DIDN'T THINK  
YOU HAD ANY  
FRIENDS

JUST A  
FEW







I am afraid.



Can I go to my home  
and tell my wife I cannot  
master my fear?





I would rather cut the tongue  
from my mouth than to  
speak those words.

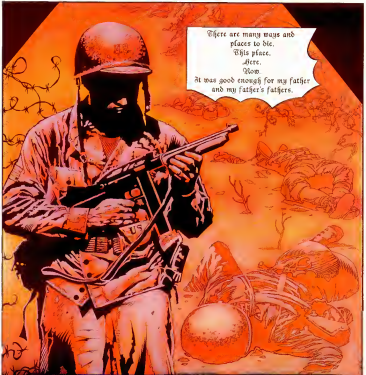


My fear is a simple one.  
A fear of peace,  
of being idle after the  
wars have stopped.



Dying an old, bitter wretch  
spouting grand tales of war and  
blood.

Rivers of it.  
Dying that way is not for me.  
A warrior.



There are many ways and  
places to die,  
This place.  
Here.  
Now.  
It was good enough for my father  
and my father's fathers.





But they are all gone.





And I am alone.



Because this is a  
place of dying...

My place.

# CARNIVORES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

(An Excerpt)

By Alan Dean Foster

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IT WAS THE MORNING AFTER THE SENSUOUS SECOND FULL MOON OF Telerangara, which heralds the coming of the spring rains, when little Colai came running into the village to cry that there were dead people washing up on the beach. And not just dead people, but people of unnatural aspect attired in strange clothes, whose pale faces were unmarked by ritual scars yet sometimes overgrown with hair.

Most of the village was not yet awake when the frantic boy came running and shrieking past the houses. At first his mother thought it was a trick. She caught him and shook him, angry that he should disturb everyone's morning for the sake of a joke. Then she saw something that, like a piece of grit, had become caught at the bottom of his eyes, and stopped shaking him. Together they hurried to the house of the chief.

Asab was just emerging as they arrived. He fumbled to adjust his fine mink-skin cloak with the impressive dark blue stripes and the phosphorescent headdress with its sweeping crest of intense red and yellow feathers. He was clearly upset at having been roused from his sleep before normal cockcrow. Hastily donned, his headdress kept threatening to slip from his head.

"I saw them, I saw them!" In addition to Asab, a crowd had begun to gather around Colai and his mother as the boy declaimed breathlessly.

"Now, child," the chief intoned solemnly, "what is it you think you have seen?" Other men and a few of the women clustered close, rubbing sleep from their eyes

while fighting back the sour morning taste of recent dreams.

"Dead people, Chief Asab! Many of them, very different from us." The boy barely paused for air as he turned and pointed. "On the beach Above where the mussels and the tyrex shells grow!"

Sleepy faces glancing with a reluctance to believe turned to the tall, lanky head of the village. Asab briefly considered the child's language before finally frowning down at the anxious, panting youth.

"We will go and see. And for your sake, boy, there had better be something on the sand besides shells and dried sea noodles!"

While barren of all vegetation save a little grass and a few hardy weeds, the beach was not devoid of wood. Gigantic logs cast ashore by the cold Samona Current littered the sand and protruded from rocky outcroppings where they had been hurled by violent storms. Interspersed among the unbranched, well-traveled forest giants were the whitening bones of demised sea creatures large and small: whales and serpents, birds and batwings, fish and stoneeaters. From such bountiful detritus did the villagers recycle useful materials for their homes and barns.

"There!" Colai pointed, but the gesture was unnecessary. Everyone saw the hungry dragonets circling over the spot.

There were a dozen or more of the little black scavengers. Wings folded, another four or five sat on the sand picking at irregular lumps that on closer inspection resolved themselves into perhaps a dozen human figures. Ululating and waving their spears as they

approached, the villagers frightened the carrion-eaters away. Hissing their displeasure, the raven dragonets rose into the transparent air on noisome, membranous wings, content for now to circle slowly overhead. They would wait.

Truth to tell, if anything Colai had understated the matter. The bodies were more than passing strange. Just as he had claimed, several showed faces marked with hair, mostly black or brown but some as yellow as the gold that Morosis the Trader brought from the far southern mountains. The figures were clad in an excessive amount of clothing, all of it dyed overbright and some fashioned of cloth so fine it was soft as a little girl's tears.

On top of this barbaric display of color most also wore armor of heavy cured leather of a type unknown to Asab or any of the other village warriors. Scenes that showed men fighting with one another and strange animals and buildings were deeply embossed on breastplates and leggings. With so much weight to carry it was a wonder that any of them had been washed ashore.

Asab and two of his best warriors knelt beside one man. With one exception, all the bodies on the beach were shorter and stockier than the average villager. They were also exclusively male.

"See." Tucarak ran a finger along the dead man's exposed cheek. It was cold with the damp of the sea and infused with death. "How smooth the skin is. How untouched." With his other hand he traced the curving scar, a sign of manhood, that decorated his own cheek.

"And how pale," added a dis-

approving Houlamu as he rose "Who are these men, and where do they come from?" Raising his gaze, he squinted out to sea. Nothing was to be seen save the dark, chill water, not even a lingering cloud. There were only the endlessly rolling waves and the amazingly homogeneous deep blue of the morning sky.

"Well, they are dead, and I am sure they would not want their dying to be wasted." With that Asab ceremoniously began the salvaging of the deceaseds' belongings, beginning with their curious apparel and assiduously examining every bulge and pocket for anything, however foreign and exotic, that might prove useful to the village.

"Can we safely eat them, do you suppose?" Tucarak held a blood-and-salt-water-soaked shirt up to the sun. "They look like men. So they should taste like men."

"Ho-yah," agreed Asab. "We will let old Fhastal try a bit of leg. She will eat anything." The chief chuckled softly. "If it does not kill her, we will know it is safe for the rest of us."

Houlamu contemplated the proposed dismemberment with distaste. "You can eat them if you wish. I only eat what I know. Or who I know." He nudged another of the limp bodies roughly with the butt of his spear.

"These are plumper folk than the Kogn or the Nulamit." As he spoke, Tucarak was tugging hard on the corpse's unusual footgear. It was much too awkward and heavy to be worn on Naumikib feet, of course, but cut into pieces it might provide the makings for a couple of pairs of serviceable sandals. "If anything, I would think

they would taste better than our neighbors."

While the chief and his warriors debated the deceased visitors' suitability for the cooking pot, other members of the tribe wandered up and down the waterline in search of other bodies. Among the searchers was a particularly tall warrior, tall even for a Naumikib, whose somber aspect was the subject of much good-natured gibling among his peers in response to the frequent jokes made at his expense. Ejole would always smile tolerantly and nod. He was not one to spoil the fun of his hunting companions even when he was the butt of their entertainment.

"Help . . . me. . ."

The words were barely audible, and for a moment Ejole Ehomba thought they were only subtle distortions of the surf-music, sprinkled upon his innocent ears like wind-blown foam. Having paused momentarily, he started to resume his walk, convinced he had heard nothing.

"Please . . . by whatever god you pray to . . . help me . . ."

Not foam, not wind, but the dying utterances of a man very like himself. Halting, Ehomba looked northward along the shore with a tracker's experienced eyes, sweeping the rocks and sand for signs of life. Eventually, he found it—or what was left of it.

The man was younger than himself, sturdily built, and clad in the most elaborate garments anyone had yet seen on the bodies on the beach. His fine leather armor extended down to cover his upper arms and legs, but it had not been enough to preserve him. There was a great hole in his right side, through which glistening red

flesh and pale white bone were clearly visible. Ehomba wondered how he had survived even this long with so deep a wound. It was ragged around the edges, clear evidence of a bite. Whatever had done it had bitten clean through the thick, tough armor. A big shark might have made such a wound, he knew. There were many sharks in the waters offshore from the village. Yes, it might have been a shark—or something else.

The man's hair was straight, shoulder length, and golden. Very different from the thick braids that were bound up in a tight bunch at the back of Ehomba's neck. He marveled at the wispy strands. Leaning forward, he wiped sea slime and sand from the pallid face. At his kindly touch, the other's eyes opened. They were a delicate, diluted blue, but not yet entirely dimmed, and they focused immediately on him.

"You . . . who are . . . ?"

"I am Ejole Ehomba, of the tribe of Naumikib. You and many others have been cast ashore on the beach below our village. Your companions are all dead." His gaze flicked briefly over the cavity in the younger man's torso. "You are dying too. I know a little medicine, but not enough to help you. Not even the old wise women of the village could help what I see. It is too late."

The stranger's reaction was not what Ehomba expected. The man's eyes grew suddenly, shockingly wide. Reaching up, he clutched the taller man's wool overshirt and used it to pull his ruined, blinding upper body off the sand until his face was only a foot away from that of his finder.

In light of the terrible injury he had suffered, the effort of will required to accomplish this feat was nothing short of astonishing.

Staring straight into Ehomba's eyes, he hused in his odd, uneven accent, "You must save her!"

"Save her? Save who?" Ehomba's bewilderment was absolute.

"Her! The Visioness Themaryl of Laconda!" Remarkably, and with what invisible reserves of strength one could only imagine, the man was shaking Ehomba by the front of his overshirt.

"I do not know of what, or of whom, you speak," the herder responded gently.

Exhausted by this ultimate physical exertion, the wounded stranger collapsed back on the sand. He was breathing more slowly now, and Ehomba could sense Death advancing fluidly across the surf, choosing as its avenue of approach, as it so often did, its friend the sea.

"Know that I am Tarn Beckwith, son of Bewaryn Beckwith, Count of Laconda North. The Visioness Themaryl was my countess, or my countess-to-be, until she was carried off by that pastulance that walks like a man and calls itself Hymneth the Possessed Many"—he coughed raggedly, and blood spilled from his lips as from an overfull cup—"many of the sons and masters of the noble houses of Greater Laconda took a solemn oath never to rest until she was returned to us and her abductor punished. To my knowledge, I and my men were the only ones to track the monster's ship this far." He paused, wheezing softly, praying for breath enough to continue.

"There was a battle this morn-

ing, on the sea. My men fought valantly. But Hymneth is an league with the evils of otherness. He cavorts with them, delights in their company, and calls upon them to help defend his miserable self. Against such foulness and depravity even brave men cannot always stand." Once more the watery blue eyes, the life fading from them, fastened on Ehomba's own. "I pass on the covenant to you, whoever you are. I charge you, on the departure of my soul, to save the innocent Themaryl and to restore her to the people of Laconda. With her abduction, the heart has gone out of that land, and all who dwell within it. I, Tarn Beckwith, place this on you."

Ehomba shook his head slowly as he gazed down at the stranger. "I am but a simple herder of cattle and harvester of fish, Tarn Beckwith." He gestured with the tip of his spear. "And this is a poor man's land, spare of people and resources. Not a place in which to raise armies. I would not even know which way to begin searching."

Raising himself off the sand with a second tremendous effort, Beckwith turned slightly at the waist and pointed. Sunlight glistened off his visible intestines. "To the northwest, across the sea. There! Having defeated the only ones capable of following him, Hymneth the depraved will feel safe in returning now to his home. I am told it lies in the fabled land of Ehl-Lannar, which is far to the west of Laconda. Seek him there, or find another who will." Once more, clenching hands clawed at Ehomba's simple attire. "You must do this, or the innocent Themaryl will be forever lost!"

"You expect too much of me, stranger Beckwith. I have a family, and cattle to watch over and protect, and—"

Ehomba halted in midsentence. His encumbrance delivered, the life force spent, the spirit of Tarn Beckwith of Laconda had at last fled his body. Gently but firmly, Ehomba disengaged the insensate fingers from his shirt and laid the upper part of the destroyed body down upon the cool sand. It lay there, teal blue eyes staring blankly at the sky, as the herdsman rose.

It would be a privilege, he knew, to consume a chopcut from the flank of so brave and dedicated a man. When the time came for the sharing out of the food, he would make a point of making this claim to Ash.

As to the dead man's trust, there was nothing he could do about it, of course. He had spoken him the truth. There were family and herd and village responsibilities to look after. What matter to him the troubles and tribulations of a people from far away, or the carrying off of one woman?

Saash and Deloog came running over. They were young men, not yet acknowledged elders, and they nodded to him respectfully as they knelt by the now motionless form at his feet. There was excitement in their voices, and their eyes were alight with the pleasure to be found in something new.

"Ejole, you found this one, but you do not take his belongings." Saash eyed him uncertainly while Deloog gazed at the heavily embossed leather armor, openly covetous.

"No. I have no interest in such

things. They are yours if you want them."

Elated at their good fortune, the two youths began to strip the body of useful material. As he yanked on a pants leg, Deloog watched the taller, older man curiously.

"These are fine things, Eyole. Why do you not take them?"

"I have been given something else, Deloog. Something I did not ask for and do not want, and I am not sure what to do with it."

The youths exchanged a glance. Ehomba was known for sitting and saying nothing for long periods of time, even when he was not guarding the herds. A peculiar man, for certain, but kindly and always helpful. The boys and girls of the village, and not a few of their parents, thought him peculiar, but nice enough in his own quiet fashion.

So the two young men did not make fun of him behind his back as he walked away from them, up the beach toward a point of rocks. Besides, they were too excited by their booty.

Working his way up into the rocks, Ehomba found a flat, dry place and sat down, positioning his spear in the crook of his right arm and resting his chin on his crossed forearms. Small waves broke themselves against the cool, gray stone. Farther up the coast, seals and merapés played in the surf, occasionally hauling out to dry themselves on the sun-warmed beach. The merapés would crack claws and shins to share with the seals, who did not have the benefit of hands with which to manipulate rocks.

Out there, somewhere, lay lands so distant he had never heard of them, exotic and alien. A

place by the name of Laconda, and another called Ehl-Laramae. A woman being taken from one to the other against her will. A woman many men were willing to die for.

Well, he already had a woman worth dying for, and two children growing up strong and healthy. Also cattle, and a few sheep, and the respect of his contemporaries. Who was he to go searching across half a world or more on behalf of people he did not know and who would probably laugh at his untutored ways and plain clothes if they saw him?

But a brave and noble man had charged him with the duty as he lay dying. As it always did, the sight of the sea and the waves soothed Eyole. Yet he remained much troubled in mind.

Half the day was done when finally he rose and started back to the village. All the bodies had been removed from the beach, leaving only the dark stains of blood to show where they had lain. Come high tide, the sea would cleanse the sand, as it cleansed everything else it touched.

That night there was a solemn feast in honor of the strangers who had died on the shore below the village. Everyone partook of the cooking, and it was agreed without dispute that wherever they had come from, it was a land of plenty, for their flesh was sweet and uncorrupted. As he ate of Tarin Beckwith, Ehomba pondered the unfortunate man's final words until those around him could no longer ignore his deep concern. Not wishing to lay his melancholy on them, he excused himself from the company of his

wife and their friends, and sought out old Phastal.

He found her by herself off to one side of the central firepit, sitting cross-legged against a tired tree while chewing with some difficulty on the remnants of a calf. Though white as salt, her hair was fastened in neat braids that spilled down her back, and she had doctored herself out for the evening in her finest beads and long strips of colored leather. She looked up at him out of her one good eye and smiled crookedly. The other eye, blinded in youth, gleamed chalky as milk. Given her few remaining teeth, it was no wonder she was finding the meat tough going.

"Eyole! Come and sit with an old woman and we'll give the young girls something to gossip about tomorrow!" Her grin fell away as she saw that his expression was even more serious than usual. "You are troubled, boy. It clouds your face like smoke."

Crossing his own legs beneath him, he sat down beside her, waving off her offer of meat, broiled squash, or bread. "I need your wisdom and your advice, Phastal, not your food."

Nodding understandingly, she picked at a strip of gristle caught between her remaining back teeth as she listened to him tell of his encounter with the dying stranger on the beach. When he had finished, she sat silent in contemplation for a long moment.

"The stranger placed this burden on you as he lay dying?" When Ehomba nodded, she responded with a terse grunt. "Then you have no choice." Idly she fingered the lightly browned slices of squash in her bowl. "Are

you or are you not a man of conviction?"

"You know that I am, old woman."

"Yes, I do. So we both know what this means. You must finish this man's work. One who dies in another's arms is no longer a stranger. Like it or not, he bound himself to you, and in so doing, his mission was bound to you as well."

The man seated across from her sighed heavily. "That is also how I interpreted what happened, and it is what I feared. But what can I do? I am only one. This Tann Beckwith had many warriors with him, and they were not enough to save him or allow him to succeed."

Fhastal sat a little straighter. "They were not Naumkib. They were from outside the stable world."

He was not persuaded. "They were still men. That is all that I am."

"No it is not." A gnarled fist the color of spoiled leather punched him several times in the upper arm. "You are Eyohe Ehomha, herder, fisherman, father, warrior, and tracker. The best tracker in the village. Can you not track that which is not seen as well as that which is?"

"That is not so great a skill. Tucarak can do it, and so can Jeloba."

"But not as good as you, boy. You know that you must do this thing."

"Yes, yes. Because this Tann Beckwith, whom I do not know, put it on me as he died. This is not fair, Fhastal."

She snorted, her nose twitching. "Fate rarely is. If you want

me to, I will explain it to Mirhanja."

"No." He uncrossed his legs preparatory to rising. "I am her husband, and it is my responsibility I will tell her. She will not take it well."

"Mirhanja is a good woman. Give her more credit. She understands honor and obligation." She fumbled a slice of fried pumpkin into her mouth. "How old is your boy?"

"Daka will be fourteen years next month."

Fhastal nodded approvingly. "Old enough to do a turn or two looking after the herd in your stead. Time he started doing something useful. The little girl will have a harder time accepting this, but her tears will pass." Reaching down, she removed one of the many colorful fetishes that hung in bunches around her neck. It was a fine carving of a woman, done in the shiny gray horn of a stegobush. As he leaned forward, she slipped the cord from which it hung over his head.

"There! Now I can go with you. I have seen the Unstable Lands in my dreams, and now I can travel with you to see them in person."

He smiled fondly as he studied the figurine hanging from its cord of sisal fiber. "You mean that this image can go with me."

"Ob no, big handsome!" She cackled gleefully. "It is the image you are speaking to right now, the image that the village children make fun of and call names behind my back." She pointed to the necklace. "That is the real me."

For just an instant, he thought he saw something in her blind eye. Something flickering, and

alive. But it was only a trick of the weak light, distorted by the cook fire.

"I will carry it as an amulet," he assured her, not wanting to hurt her feelings. Fhastal meant well, but she was a little crazy. "So that it will bring me luck."

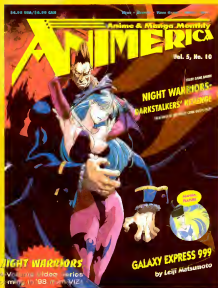
"If you'd carry it somewhere else on your body, it might bring me luck." She laughed madly again. "I hope that it will, Eyohe." She made shooing motions at him, like a mother hen guiding one of her brood of chicks. "Now then—go and see to your wife, so that you may lie with her before you leave. Make your farewells to your children. And be sure to stop by Likulu's house. She and the other women will gather some small things to give you to take on your journey. Meet me tomorrow by the stone lightning and I will set you on your way. I can do no more than that."

He straightened. "Thank you, Fhastal. With luck, I may be able to return this woman to her people and return home in a month or two."

He did not believe it as he spoke it, but that did not matter. Fhastal did not believe it either. Without discussion, they chose to connive in the illusion.

## End of Part I

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